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THE REMEDIES WE USE.

AN IMPARTIAL VIEW OF THE PRESENT STATE OF THE
MATERIA MEDICA,
WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR ITS IMPROVEMENT.

“WHEN PEOPLE ONCE ARE IN THE WRONG,
“EACH LINE THEY ADD IS MUCH TOO LONG;
“WHO FASTEST WALKS, BUT WALKS ASTRAY,
“IS ONLY FARTHEST FROM HIS WAY.”

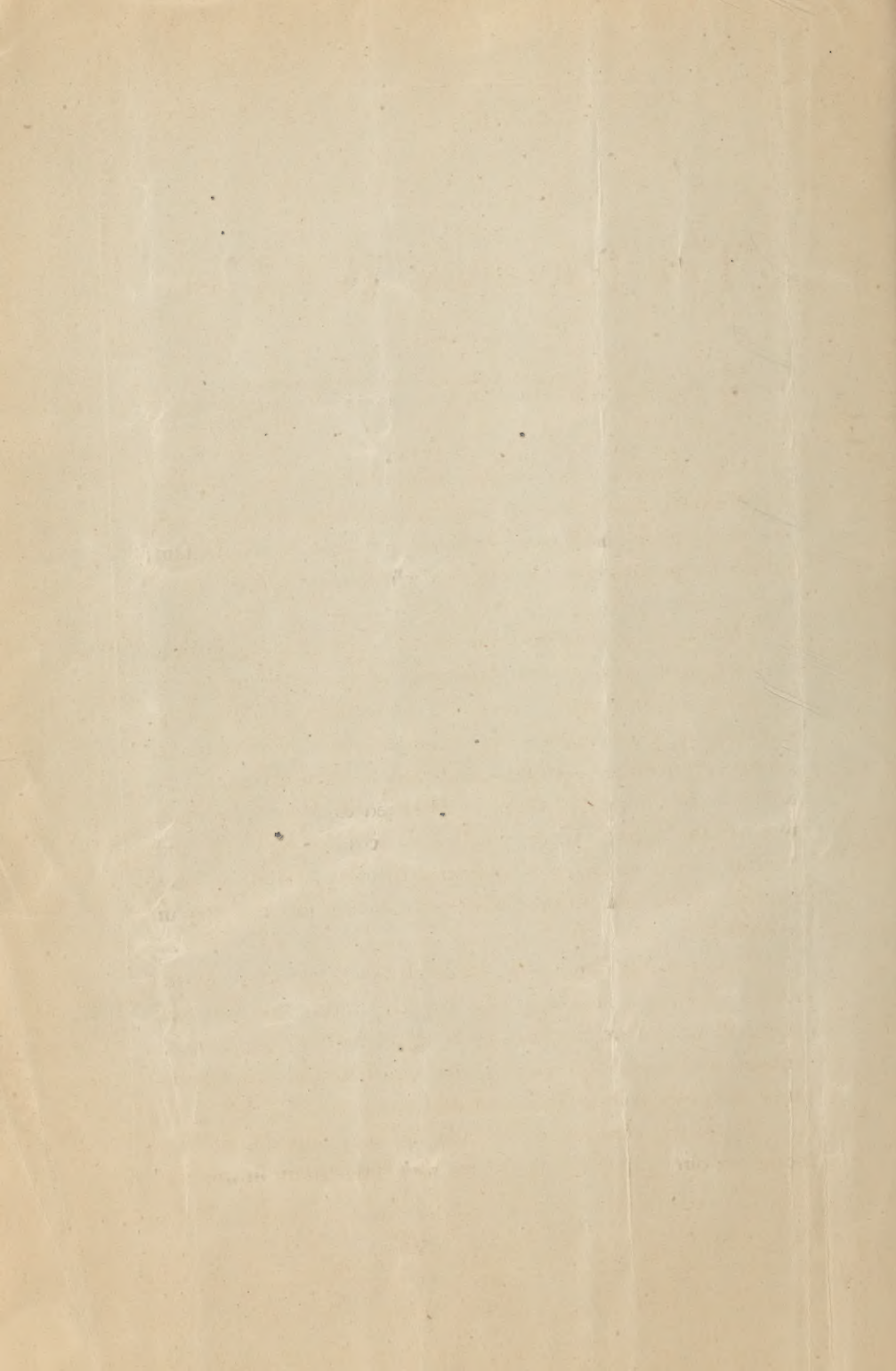


NASHVILLE:

GAMBLE & CO., No. 46 UNION STREET.

FALL & SONS, PRINTERS, COR. MARKET AND UNION STS.

1870



THE REMEDIES WE USE.

"When I was young, I possessed at least twenty remedies for every disease ; but when advanced in age, I found twenty diseases without a single remedy."

DR. RADCLIFFE.

I.

There was a time, in the history of our race, when we were unable to distinguish among the various things surrounding us, which were proper and best for nutriment, which for purposes of healing, and which were to be shunned as fatal poisons.

While the beasts and the birds were endowed with an instinct, ever ready and sufficient to guide them in the selection of their daily food and avoidance of destructive poisons, *we* were supplied with reasoning faculties, and told to observe, remember, compare, and thus to learn the properties and uses of all created things. Destined to have "dominion over all the earth," yet compelled to acquire it by slow and careful steps, we have advanced with the march of ages, gaining more and more power with every forward step in knowledge.

Though our dominion, especially over the more subtle forces of nature, has increased greatly during the last half century, we yet are far from knowing all that is to be known, and of wielding all the control that we shall wield, in accordance with our endowments and destiny.

From the observation of facts, as they would chance to come in our way, we learned to *seek* after them, in market



places and wherever else people were wont to congregate, for the interchange of views, as well as articles of merchandize.

And, later still, we learned, not simply to lend an attentive ear to what was told us, but also to inquire, asking diligently, for what we would know from others.

And now, never satisfied with simply listening for what others may tell us—not even to gather the golden words from nature's voice—we ply our sharpest interrogatories, demanding of nature to yield up to us more and yet more of her hidden mysteries. Upward, downward, and in every direction we explore, each day rendered more eager by rich discoveries made. Any proposition, any concatenation of alleged facts, any system, any theory—physical or metaphysical—that shuns the blaze of our torch and will not bear the free application of the pick and the hammer, in our great search for truth, must be cast aside as of no worth, no use, in our practical age. It matters not how venerable and moss-covered, or how elegantly antique anything may be, unless it bears our scrutiny, and comes up to the great wants of the world, we have no use for it whatever; and the sooner it is swept away, to make room for something more practical, the better.

But now, for *the remedies we use.*

As almost every article known to the human eye has in some country, at some time, been an object of religious worship, so has almost everything in turn likewise been cherished as a remedy for human ailments; and it is not more wonderful that the fancy of men, in their dreamy days, should exalt so many worthless and repugnant substances to the rank of chief remedies, than that their superstition should likewise deify and adore them as gods.

The records of Medicine, taking us back far into the shadowy past, reveal much that is sad and much that is

ludicrous; while they spread out, in vast profusion, numberless facts, variously grouped by the fancies, theories and systems of men.

In the earlier ages, so simple were the habits and modes of living, and so exercised and invigorated were the muscular and other systems of the human body, that they were but slightly, if at all, impressed by morbid influences. Diseases were few, and curative agents little thought of. However, as time passed and men became subjected to enervating habits, their aliments increased and remedies were in demand.

As all articles of ailment were of a nature to be digested and assimilated, for the growth or repair of vital tissues, possessing a power to excite the organism only so much as required in a state of health, they could not officiate as agents in the cure of disease. Means were required capable of influencing and changing the conditions of one organ or another in a positive and certain manner; and remedies were therefore taken from the large class of articles not used as aliment, but for the most part regarded as poisons.

Thus, quite naturally, came the practice, so variously theorized upon and explained ever since, of curing an abnormal action or condition by the institution of another abnormal action or condition, which latter should itself subside and disappear, its curative work being accomplished. This, then, is the great fact underlying all medical practice, and which should ever be borne in mind, namely—that all remedies, come whence they may, be they animal, mineral or vegetable, solids, liquids, or vapors, palpable or impalpable—and upon whatever theory or principle exhibited—if they are addressed to the vital economy, they are and ever must be, in their very nature, *primarily hostile to human health and life.*

Let not the *Lobelia* taunt the *Arsenic*, with being a poison; nor the Cold Water taunt the *Lobelia*; nor the Electricity, the *Cold Water*; nor the Gymnastics, the *Electricity*; nor yet the Magnetic Passes, the *Gymnastics*; for each and all, at one time or another, have impaired human health, if they have not also destroyed human life. True, the various agents are not all equally noxious or destructive; yet he who vaunts himself, in wielding powers, not primarily antagonistic to the harmony of the healthy organism, and which are yet capable of curing positive and well established cases of disease, is poorly versed in the laws governing the human economy, and must be possessed of very little experience that is not fallacious.

The *Dover's Powder* brings the gentle slumber, by virtue of its power, (in larger quantity) to induce a congestion of the brain.

The *Valerian* allays the nervousness, by virtue of its power, (in larger quantity) to excite the cerebro-spinal system, even to mental derangement and spasms.

Electricity overcomes paralysis, by virtue of its power, (in greater quantity) to destroy sensibility and motion, and even life itself.

The *Magnetic or Mesmeric Pass* restores nervous harmony, by virtue of its power, (otherwise exerted) to disturb the harmony of nerve actions, in the production of unusual phenomena.

And the *Aconite* globules quiet the tumultuous action of the heart, by virtue of their power, (in larger quantity) to excite, exhaust, and finally to stop entirely, the action of that most vital organ.

So much for the general character and disposition of the *remedies we use*.

To display our remedies in classes—in rank and file—would be an endless undertaking. To name them would be impossible; for they are legions upon legions. After all the siftings of experience these many centuries, since the art of healing became something of a science, the *Materia Medica* is yet of vast proportions, appalling indeed to the student, who honestly strives to learn the properties and powers of his various means of cure.

Toward the close of the last century, the distinguished Dr. Cullen, of England, said: “The writers on *Materia Medica* abound with numberless false conclusions, which are, however, supposed or pretended to be drawn from experience. Such indeed is the state of this matter that nobody can consult these writers with any success or safety, unless he is prepared with a great deal of *skepticism* on the subject.” We may add, that since that day, Chemistry—analyzing and combining—and Botany—classifying and arranging the gathered stores of ages, to suit this theory and that—have accomplished little more than to make “confusion worse confounded.” If a “great deal of skepticism” was then required to make the practitioner safe in consulting authors on *Materia Medica*, certainly none less will do at the present time. One thing, at all events, is very plain—such are the babel tongues spoken, in the medical profession, regarding remedies; so contradictory are their teachings in the same schools, and so different their uses of the very same means, that the people—who are the afflicted, and who are to be practiced upon, and who are to pay for the practice, be it curative or killing—are rapidly becoming “prepared with a *great deal* of skepticism on the subject.”

II.

The earliest knowledge of curative means, as we have already intimated, was largely accidental, and passed from one to another by word of mouth, coming down traditionally from one generation to another. We might say, after the manner of Blackstone, that, then the world had only *Medicina non scripta*, the memory of man being its only medical repository, and the living tongue its only medical gazetteer.

Then, also, the world had but one school of practice—the Empirical, in which, concerning the nature and action of remedies, the only desire was, to learn what particular disease each was known to cure.

To affirm that, always, or even in a majority of cases, ailments which disappeared, after the use of certain remedies, *were cured by them*, involved a great fallacy—the “post hoc, ergo propter hoc”—and led to the continued use of articles, in themselves, inert, or only calculated to injure. Cases of disease are as various, as the causes which produce them, multiplied by all personal peculiarities, and again by all attending circumstances; and consequently, what may have cured a case, of a certain disease, yesterday, may fail entirely to cure another of the same class to-day.

And when, for the sake of convenience, at a later day, efforts were made to gather human ailments into groups, and, upon them, to classify all remedies, there was a multiplication of fallacies and of bad results.

For example, a woman recovers from hysterical convulsions, after drinking freely of a certain *herb tea*; and several others, under similar circumstances, are likewise relieved. Immediately the herb is everywhere commended and prescribed for convulsions—convulsions without distinction of cause—convulsions of women, of men, and of children.

Being assigned a place in the class of *Antispasmodics*, it is further recognized as a remedy for all kinds of spasmodic affections, epileptic, apoplectic, helminthic, etc. Afterward, the chemist, by careful analysis, detects in the celebrated herb, an "active principle," the same as found in a dozen other articles, which have passed through his laboratory; and, forthwith, the undeniable inference, that *the whole dozen are good for spasms*. The botanist, bringing his glass to bear upon the stamens, petals and leaves of the herb, discovers, that it belongs to a large class of plants already quite well known; and by fair analogy, the wonderful virtues of the new comer are carried over to that whole class, and accorded to each of its members, in turn.

Thus introduced by empiricism, and ranked high, in *Materia Medica*, by the "lights of science," how long must it take the world to learn—*the woman, in the first instance, having been relieved of her convulsions by the HEAT of the tea alone*—that the herb, and all its analogues, chemical and botanical, have not a particle of power to cure spasms, or spasmodic diseases; but, that, on the other hand, they have an injurious effect upon the general health, whenever administered? Such are some of the fallacies underlying the empirical mode of furnishing *the remedies we use*; and such the great uncertainty, attaching to much that has come down to us, even through the more scientific and pretentious channels of modern times.

Looking forth again, since the rise of the many theoretical schools in Medicine, and, especially, since the knowledge of Anatomy and Physiology has greatly increased, and we see a disposition to throw aside much of the trash furnished by Empiricism, and, as we have already intimated, a wish, by closer scrutiny and experimentation, to gain a more certain knowledge of the properties and powers of the various med-

icines. Attributing certain diseases to an over-action, or a want of action, or other derangement, in one organ or another, medical men have endeavored to ascertain how medicines affect the different organs, increasing or diminishing their action, so that they may be able to employ them, in accordance with their cherished theories. If, for example, they find a case of fever, their theory of which is, that it proceeds from a deficient action of the kidneys, or of the bowels, they at once inquire for a diuretic or a cathartic agent, with which they can quicken the action of the delinquent parts. A display of the cures, or imaginary cures performed by the various remedies, is therefore deemed insufficient; and hence, experiments, with the more active drugs, have been made upon rabbits, cats and dogs, as well as upon the persons of the sick. The records of Toxicology, having been culled over, much information, as to their deeper and more destructive effects, has also been gathered. The results of such experiments and gatherings have come to constitute the bulk of the *Materia Medica*, as now generally received and followed.

In regard to the trial of medicines upon the sick, it must be evident to all, who considers for a moment, the complex conditions and circumstances attending the effort, that such a method can, in no wise, give either a full or a true exhibit of their distinctive properties and powers.

The human system, laboring under disease, struggling to regain its normal state, and, by a multitude of symptoms, pointing out its sufferings to the observer, is dosed with medicines which increase the signs of distress, multiplying the symptoms, or else changing their character, till finally a calm ensues, and the patient slowly recovers. How shall the observer discriminate now, and write down the effects, attributa-

ble to the medicines administered? Of all the symptoms from first to last, which belonged to the disease?—which to the drugs?—and which to both acting together?

He cannot even predicate the recovery upon the action of the remedies administered.

But suppose the case has resulted fatally, and a post mortem examination is made, how shall he determine which of the pathological appearances, to ascribe to the disease, and which to the medicines? And how shall he be satisfied that death was not more the result of his treatment, than of the disease?

As soon might the chemist give us the qualities of an unknown substance, treated in a crucible, with half a dozen other compounds; or a mathematician the exact amount of force spent upon a ball, by one, of half a dozen bats, striking it, at once, from different directions.

Human learning and powers of analysis are not yet equal to the task of ascertaining the positive and uniform effects of medicines, by their trial upon the sick; especially as they are commonly administered, two or more in combination, or in rapid alternation, with each other.

In regard to their trial upon the lower animals, it must also be plain, that while such a mode might inform the experimenter, as to some of the more striking and poisonous effects of drugs—while it might furnish some few objective symptoms—it would be entirely unfitted and unable to display the subjective, and, especially, such as indicate mental and emotional states. Considering how large a proportion of human ailments are of nervous origin and character—how, almost entirely the practitioner, in the treatment of insanity and other affections of the brain, must depend upon mental and emotional symptoms, we cannot look to the brute test for a satisfactory knowledge of remedies.

Besides, the value of the objective symptoms, thus elicited, when applied to the human system, must always depend upon uncertain analogies. Nor is it, by any means safe to infer that drugs will produce the same pathological conditions in man that the experimenter has observed, upon their administration, in poisonous doses, to the rabbit, the cat, and the dog; especially since he cannot be sure that the animals were in good health when the experiments were begun.

Again, the information furnished by Toxicology—records of cases of poisoning, by accident or for suicide,—while of great value, is not sufficiently complete. Such cases, for the most part, occur at times and places, and under circumstances such as to preclude either a proper observance or a full recording of symptoms.

If a qualified observer be present, he complicates the experiment by the use of antidotes, in his effort to save life. The pathological appearances which he may examine, after death, even if clearly attributable to the poison, are of little value if he is unable to present a proper statement of the outward symptoms, whereby we may afterward recognize similar states when they occur in the sick.

Taking a survey of the huge volumes devoted to a recital of medicinal properties and powers—seeing their contradictions and discrepancies—how largely they are made up of unreliable information, handed down, from age to age, with little or no improvement, we are about ready to endorse the sentiment of the distinguished *Dr. Girtanner*, who said “Our *Materia Medica* is nothing but a careful collection of fallacious observations which medical men have made at all times.”

The “observations” are “fallacious,” because they have

been wrongly made—the mode being at fault, and not the men—and no improvement can be looked for, short of a thorough re-trial of medicinal agents, in accordance with the demands of science, and the urgent wants of humanity.

III.

At this stage of our inquiry it becomes us to examine, more closely, the kinds of information concerning remedies, required in the art of healing.

This determined, we can the more clearly see and judge, as to the proper methods of observation and experimentation necessary to make up a reliable, or even safe *Materia Medica*.

We may begin with a proposition, which is so near an axiom, that we need not stop for its demonstration, namely—*that our information, so far as possible, concerning remedies, should be co-extensive, qualitatively and quantitatively, with our knowledge of disease.*

Our knowledge of disease is made up of all the information we can gain, of its locality, nature and tendency, in each case submitted for our consideration. Inasmuch as disease is, more generally, a disturbance within the organism, removed from immediate inspection, we can study it only through its proper exponents or symptoms. To do this successfully, requires us not simply to use our eyes and ears, and other organs of sense, as they were used ages ago, in scanning the most obvious appearances; but we must, also, employ all the aids furnished us by science and experience, such as the microscope, the thermometer, the hydrometer, and likewise the tests of chemistry, mechanics, electricity, etc. It is not sufficient that we observe the character of the pulse, appearance of the tongue and temperature of the surface;

but we must go deeper, and examine every indication of a departure from a state of health, in the secretions, excretions, etc., neglecting no proper means of diagnosis.

And not only so, but we must go yet further, and—in the language of the great *Hippocrates*—"consider the conversations, the manners, the taciturnity, the imaginings, the watchings and the dreams," of the patient. Post mortem appearances—pathological anatomy—should likewise be carefully studied; although a great part of the information thus derived is rendered uncertain by the remedies commonly employed to control the disease about to prove fatal, and from the fact that a clear record of the symptoms, developed during the progress of the disease, is rarely kept.

Having thus briefly surveyed the scope and quality of the facts or symptoms to be observed, in the study of diseases, we are now somewhat prepared to determine the scope and quality of what must be observed, in the study of medicines or medicinal impressions, and thence to infer correctly, the mode and the means required in the prosecution of that study.

We must, in short, know all that we can, by any means, learn of the effects, in the human organism, of each remedy, when its operation is uninterrupted, and its symptoms unobscured. And it must now be plain that such knowledge can be gained in no other way, than by a trial of the various means of cure, one by one, upon or in, the healthy human organism, under circumstances favorable for the full exhibition and clear observance of their effects, and with such effects subjected to the closest scrutiny possible, with all the instruments and tests furnished by modern discoveries.

It is hardly necessary for us to offer proofs of the soundness of the conclusion we have thus been compelled to arrive

at by force of facts as well as logic; but, by way of illustration, we may add, that when the chemist desires to learn the properties of a new mineral, he does not content himself with what may be told him, concerning its qualities, by the great-grandfather of the man who owns the mine, nor does he stop with the information, as to its uses, given by the village smith, who, in his forge, has been able to obtain some lead from a mass of it; nor does he settle his views, from its resemblance, in color, to some other familiar ore, but he proceeds carefully to analyze it. In making his analysis, he does not follow the rules of arithmetic or of grammar, nor employ the instruments of astronomy or surveying—things all good and important in their respective spheres—but he goes into his laboratory, furnished with crucible, chemical re-agents, and all other means necessary to make a complete *chemical* analysis.

In placing the mineral in his crucible, he is particular that no other substances are there, to hinder his experiment; nor does he allow other minerals to be thrown in, till his process is complete; when, behold! he has not only lead, and traces of bismuth, and cobalt, and copper; but he has also *a large per cent. of pure, bright silver*. In like manner—with just as much reason, and by just as great a necessity, should men of the sayings of the great-grandfathers, relating to curative means, and the fallacious observations of medical writers who have copied one from another, for centuries, be set aside, while the earnest experimenter of the present, practical age, goes direct to his work. Nor should his special apparatus be that of natural philosophy, or chemistry, or mechanics; nor his rules those adapted to other departments of inquiry.

His crucible being the human organism in its normal

state, and the vital forces his re-agents, there must be no disease within, to complicate the process, and no casting in of drugs to vitiate the results. Seeking only the *medicinal* character of a given agent, its power over living animal tissue, without regard to its other properties, his apparatus is "a sound mind in a sound body," removed from all counteracting influences; and his rules those which govern in the domain of Medicine.

The *healthy vital test*, then, offers the only proper method of gaining a knowledge of *the remedies we use*, such as to meet the wants of scientific medicine, and the necessities of suffering humanity; and yet, it was barely mentioned as something desirable, and never put in practice till less than a century ago.

At first, trials were made by practicing physicians; themselves taking a drug and noting its effects, then administering the same to their students and other persons in health, whom they could persuade to become subjects of experimentation. "Provings," as they were called, thus made, though sometimes highly valuable, are not such as could be desired, nor such as to meet all the purposes either of science or practice.

The physician, though himself in good health, is subject constantly to disturbing influences, such as fatigue, loss of sleep, irregular eating, exposure in the sick room, and to various medicines, which he must daily handle; to say nothing of the mental anxieties incident to the care of patients about to die.

And the students, and other persons, although in health, and less disturbed by external influences, are yet, not sufficiently acquainted with regional anatomy, or pathology, to know how to observe symptoms, or to locate, or otherwise

describe them, so as to make the results intelligible and trustworthy. The "provers" have thus too often been incapacitated for their great work, by ill health, opposing circumstances, lack of necessary knowledge, want of uniformity in points of observation, and last, but by no means least, *an entire absence of the microscope, and other such instruments, together with the tests of chemistry; all of which are just as important in gaining a knowledge of a medicine as of a disease.*

If such means are of no importance in tracing drug symptoms—if they can furnish us no useful information as to the alterations from a state of health, effected by drugs in the human system—then let us not, as learned doctors, longer fool our patients and ourselves by their employment in the examination of the symptoms of disease.

Of what practical value is it for us to know, that *lithic acid* abounds in the fluid secreted by the kidneys, if we can learn of no medicine capable of producing either an alkaline or acid state of the urine? Or why look for *albumen*, if we have at command no means either to produce or remove it? As, in making a proper diagnosis of disease, the sensations, emotions, secretions, excretions, and whatever else affords a basis for comparison, whereby we may learn the character and extent of departure from a normal standard—are to be scrutinized by all the means at command; so also, in tracing the effects of medicines under trial, we have no right to omit the close observance of every symptom, objective or subjective, mental or physical, by the aid of all the lights furnished us by science and art.

The works on *Materia Medica*, professedly based on the *healthy vital test*, made up in part of such "provings" as we have characterized as faulty; and in part of the reports of Toxicology, and of Clinical experience—while very useful

—must call for some of Cullen's "skepticism on the subject." Nor does there seem to be much improvement, as the years go by. In place of a more thorough and proper trial of the old remedies, there is a wonderful haste to introduce new ones. To lessen the interminable labor of the practitioner, in hunting his remedy, various expedients have been resorted to, such as Repertories, Epitomes, Abstracts, etc., in which there is only a constant "hashing and re-hashing" of the same symptoms and observations. As the streams partake of the same qualities as the fountain, whence they flow; so all such arrangements and re-arrangements must forever partake of the uncertainty attaching to the original gatherings and provings.

Clinical experience is invoked in the vain endeavor to sift the chaff from the wheat—vain, we say, because experience has tried, for centuries upon centuries, to give the world reliable remedies, without success.

This falling back upon Empiricism, argues little in favor of law, principle, or science, in medicine.

Fishing for "physiological effects," for "characteristic symptoms," and for "key notes," with clinical "tackle," in the vast sea of present observations and provings, is but a repetition of the old, indirect, and frequently fallacious methods of acquiring knowledge; and is entirely unbecoming the present age of earnest and positive research.

IV.

Such has been the growing skepticism, with regard to the remedies set forth in the works on *Materia Medica*, that many physicians, well educated and successful as the majority, have turned from their employment, and given themselves

to the exclusive use of some one agent, under the guidance of an enlightened empiricism; or, as claimed by themselves, upon well settled physiological principles. Hence the *Water Cure*, the *Movement Cure*, *Electrical Baths*, *Mesmeric Passes*, etc. The misfortune, however, has been that water, and movements, and electricity, and animal magnetism, have been employed in thousands of cases where they could do no good whatever, but rather harm; simply, for the want of such a knowledge of their properties, and of their special powers over the human organism as we have been advocating, and as may be obtained, only, by the healthy vital test. And many physicians like *Dr. Radcliffe*,—whose language we quoted at the head of our first chapter,—after thirty and forty years of medical experience, have ceased to employ all *active* remedies, on account of the exceeding uncertainty of their effects, and the probability of their doing therefore more harm than good. In his old age, the distinguished *Dr. Benjamin Rush*, wrote, “We have assisted in multiplying diseases; we have done more—we have increased their mortality.” Old *Dr. Good*, well known to the people, on account of his popular writings, said—“The science of Medicine is a barbarous jargon, and *the effects of our medicines on the human system are in the highest degree uncertain*, except indeed, that they have already destroyed more lives than war, pestilence and famine combined.”

The great *Hufeland*, of Germany, wrote—“My opinion is, that more harm than good is done by physicians, and I am convinced that had I left my patients to Nature, instead of prescribing drugs, more would have been saved.”

Dr. Farre, the renowned English statistician, declared, “Nine-tenths of diseases are medicinal diseases.”

And *Sir John Forbes*, late physician to Queen Victoria,

not long ago, wrote—"In a considerable proportion of diseases it would fare as well, or better, with patients, in the actual condition of the medical art, as more commonly practiced, if all remedies, at least all *active* remedies, especially drugs, were abandoned."

And, as if to bring the proofs of what we have been asserting down to the very day and hour, in which we write, *Paul F. Eve, M. D., Professor of Surgery*, in his introductory to the class in the Missouri Medical College, lately delivered, says—"Knowing how little can be done in the way of curing *by the Materia Medica*, we are doing all we can to obviate the necessity of resorting to it. We rely now, more upon the operations of nature and hygiene. The older a doctor becomes, the greater his experience, the less confidence he has in the multiplicity of remedial agents."

The medical profession, as a whole, has reached a point where it must be content to see its wisest and best members forsake the ranks in hopeless despair; and the people flee in terror from its ministrations—or it must arouse from the old "tread mill rounds," tear away the cobwebs of the past, and come out into the broad daylight, to correct its knowledge and adjust anew its means of combat with disease.

Gray hairs, wise looks, long titles, large libraries, and colleges, and hospitals, and societies, will all fail to retain for it the confidence and the patronage of an enlightened people, if—refusing to adopt the more improved methods of investigation, in reference to its means of cure—physicians go on prescribing doses, the effects of which they know little or nothing of.

Considering that all remedies are, primarily, *inimical* to human health and life, no one, to whom is committed the

health and life of his fellow beings is justified, with his present knowledge of *Materia Medica*, in their free administration to the sick.

Every prescription of large doses of active drugs is as apt to kill as to cure.

The darkness of superstition and ignorance into which every pretender can resort in the performance of his mummeries, and from which he may bring out his sovereign balm for every ill—invested with all the more awe and confidence, the farther removed its origin from the scrutiny or understanding of mortals—has been the foster-mother of sects and creeds in medicine, and of charlatans without number.

Let those who so earnestly and well, have by every possible means, opened up anatomy and physiology to the broadest light, and carried their investigations far into the domain of pathology, hygiene, etc., join now, in a similar effort to improve and exalt the *Materia Medica*.

The great work cannot be performed by one or two individuals; nor by scores, scattered here and there all over the world; but must be the joint effort of many acting together at one place, under the direction of one set of rules and tests, and they the best that can be furnished by modern science.

Such an undertaking carried on, regardless of all theories and schools in medicine, would tend to obliterate sectarian lines, and to cast such a flood of light along the practitioner's pathway, as to enable him to move forward with safety, and ultimately to find himself and others drawn together in the one true and best way of healing the sick.

Let the work begin with the great universal remedies, *Cold*, *Heat*, and *Electricity*, and extend to the various agents,

which, in our stumbling experience we have found to possess positive and special powers over the human organism.

In due time, the medicinal properties of matter would be known as clearly as the chemical or mechanical.

By proper efforts, State and Governmental aid could be secured for an institution proposing to ascertain the *medicinal products of our country*; just as such aid has already been given largely to geological, mineralogical, botanical, and other surveys and explorations. Certainly it is no more important for us to know the mineral than the medicinal resources and wealth of our country. Indeed, as relief from physical disease and suffering, and the prolongation of life is of more worth than money, or mines, or other material wealth, so would the results of such an undertaking, as we urge, be more worthy of public support, than almost any other.

If by aught, that we have written, we have awakened any earnest thoughts toward a more perfect knowledge of *the remedies we use*, our object in writing this paper is attained.

PUBLISHER'S NOTICE.

We issue this little treatise as a valuable addition to the stock of popular medical literature. It explains to the people why remedies, prescribed for their ailments, so often fail to afford relief, and casts some new rays of light along the pathway of the medical profession.

Its author prefers to let his present little work go upon its merits alone, desiring only that it be read, as it has been written, with a sincere desire for the improvement of the healing art.

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